

GUIDE FOR ANALYSING QUESTIONS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS



The questionnaire for business owners is divided into five sections:

1. Overview Questions / Foundation Questions
2. Financing / Sales Oriented Questions
3. Marketing Oriented Questions
4. Training and Consulting Questions
5. Concluding Questions

This guide will go through the key idea behind each section and how to briefly analyse each.

1. Overview Questions / Foundation:

This section is intended to get to know the business owner and his/her operations. The focus here is on some of the key success factors in getting the business going and the types of support that they received. *(HINT: business owners LOVE to talk about their business “baby” so get as excited as they do about their business and what they have accomplish!).*

In analysing this section, your focus should be trying to list out the key success factors, which and what type of organisation(s) with helpful in providing information to the owner in starting and running the business and what the

barriers and difficulties have been in starting the business. At the end of all the interviews you will find a number of common answers across those that you have interviewed in each of these areas – the more frequent an answer is, the more important is what has been said.

2. Financing / Sales Oriented Questions:

This section is intended to understand the types of financing that were used to start the business and then maintain the business. In analysing this section, you should be focusing in on the various types of financing that have been used by the owner and its impact on the business. *(HINT: sometimes you may hear financial terms that you are uncertain about; feel free to ask for clarifications about these).*

Each respondent will likely have utilised a number of different sources of finance relevant to this/her business so do not worry if you do not see the types of common answers that you heard in the first section. At the end of all the interviews you will be able to get a sense of how important certain types of financing arrangements are to start and maintain those interviewed.

3. Marketing Oriented Questions:

This section is intended to understand the customer base of the business and the ways in which the company markets itself and decided on where to locate its operations. *(HINT: ask to see some marketing / promotion materials for the business and/or browse their website before or during the interview with the owner).*

In analysing this section, you will find that each business is going to have a unique set of customers and tools that have used to market / promote the business. There will be a focus made on the decision of where to locate the business and you should try to find common elements used by those that you have interviewed in making this decision.

4. Training and Consulting Questions:

This section is intended to understand the various types of training and consulting that have been utilised by the business and the types of organizations that have helped aid the development of the business and its employees. *(HINT: sometimes business owners may feel 'embarrassed' to admit that they had others help them so try to put them at ease in this section).*

In analysing this section, there may be some of your respondents who have simply "gone alone" and not utilised any training or consulting advice; feel free to 'prompt' them in such situations (i.e., "really, you have done any training needed yourself?"). In analysing this section try to look for frequently named organizations that may have assisted the business owners in these issues.

5. Concluding Questions:

This section is intended to gain a bit of insight into some of the lessons learned by the owner in starting and maintaining his/her business and what they would differently if they started again. *(HINT: like in section 1 of the questionnaire, owners LOVE to talk about their 'baby' so get excited and learn from their experiences – the more you learn the more others will learn!).*

In analysing this section, there will be a wide variety of suggestions put forward and feel free to prompt for more ideas. Try to look for common ideas expressed by the respondents or look for common themes that are coming through in what they are saying.

